



UNITED STATES SENATOR

JOHN CORNYN

REPORT ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Dear Friends,

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, providing the American people with the best possible protection against future attacks instantly became the highest priority of the federal government. In this regard, I was proud to support the President's plan to consolidate the 22 federal agencies with homeland security functions into a single Department of Homeland Security, focused exclusively on defending our citizens. On March 1, the component agencies were officially transferred into the new Department.

As the federal government organizes to defend the homeland, it is important to remember that it is our communities' first responders, state and local law enforcement, fire fighters, and emergency medical personnel, who serve on the front lines of our efforts to protect the homeland. State, city and county governments play a crucial role in planning for and responding to potential future attacks, and it is vital that the federal government assist in providing our first responders with the resources they need to gather and share intelligence, harden vulnerable targets and quickly and effectively respond to unconventional attacks.

There are a variety of federal programs available to provide emergency planning assistance, training, equipment, and other vital support for the efforts of local first responders to deal with new threats. The information provided here outlines some of the major programs provided through the new Department of Homeland Security. I hope it will be helpful to city and county governments in identifying sources of funding for local initiatives to protect our communities.

It is my pleasure and honor to represent you in the United States Senate. If you have any questions or require assistance applying for these programs, please do not hesitate to contact me or Spencer Chambers of my staff at (202) 224-2934.

Sincerely,

Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)

The newly created U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is providing assistance directly to states to help them in developing a comprehensive homeland security strategy and help defray associated costs. The organization administering the program for the State of Texas is the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) at Texas A&M University in College Station.

The program is developed to build upon the progress already made by municipalities in improving their capability to respond to emergencies. Among the programs' benefits to local governments is assistance to purchase specialized equipment to prevent and respond to incidents of terrorism. There is a particular focus on providing material to enable first responders to respond to incidents involving the use of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) weapons. SHSGP also helps localities develop strategies for the protection of critical infrastructure and prevention of terrorist incidents.

Currently, TEEX is working with nearly 1000 eligible jurisdictions in Texas. Participating jurisdictions complete a risk assessment and identify funding needs and submit them to TEEX. TEEX then considers and evaluates each assessment to develop a funding plan based upon the statewide homeland security strategy.

For additional information, please contact Charley Todd, Program Director, at (979) 458-6815 phone or (979) 458-6925 fax.

Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse Program

This program offers surplus radiological detection instrumentation to cities. The equipment available is "older-generation" instruments formerly utilized by the United States Department of Energy. The goal of the program to keep equipment that was still fully functional in use for the benefit of local governments. Applicants may also receive equipment training.

Currently, only large metropolitan areas are eligible. However, because of the success of the program, as of June 1, 2003, it will become a national program.

For more information, please contact Kerry Thomas with the Department of Homeland Security at (202) 616-6707.

Firefighter Assistance Grants

Description: These annual grants help local fire departments by providing financial assistance in one of the following categories:

1. Fire operations and firefighter safety - This program includes training, wellness and fitness, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, and modifications of fire facilities (alarms, sprinklers, vehicle exhaust systems, etc.).
2. Fire prevention - This program includes public education and awareness, code enforcement and arson prevention.
3. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - This program includes equipment, training, and wellness and fitness.
4. Vehicle acquisition - The purchase of firefighting vehicles and ambulances.

Eligibility: Local career or volunteer fire departments. For-profit departments are not eligible

Maximum Grant Award: \$750,000

Matching Requirements: 10% for departments serving areas under 50,000 people, and 30% for those departments serving areas with a population of 50,000 or greater.

Contact Information: Firefighter Assistance Grant information line - (866) 274-0960 or email at usfagrants@fema.gov. The forms and guidelines can be found at www.usfa.fema.gov.

Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg, Maryland

Description: The EMI provides many different training courses in emergency response including terrorism response, disaster operations, and hazardous materials incidents.

Eligibility: Local and state emergency response employees

Cost: Free tuition. Travel expenses reimbursed. Meals and personal expenses are not included

Contact Information: Courses, applications, and detailed information can be found at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb> or by calling the EMI admissions office at (301) 447-1035.

Hazardous Materials Assistance Program

Description: Participating communities are selected by the state to work directly with FEMA to review and update their emergency response plans, train their responders, and test their plan for strengths and weaknesses in a hazardous materials incident.

Eligibility: Local communities are chosen by the Texas Office of Emergency Management Services

Contact Information: Contact the Region 6 Training Officer in Denton at (940) 898-5399 for information on applying to the program.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced availability of bioterrorism funds to the Texas Department of Health (TDH) to help enhance preparations against terrorism or other public health emergencies. Of those funds, \$48 million is for Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism and \$8.1 million will be utilized for the Hospital Preparedness and Response Capacity program.

Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

This program is a formula grant to all 50 states to upgrade preparedness for responding to bioterrorism attacks and other public health threats and emergencies. The vast majority of the funds will go to local health departments in support of their current plans in the areas of preparedness planning, epidemiology and surveillance, microbiology laboratory work, the Health Alert Network plans, risk communication and public information, and workforce development. In addition, requests to build chemical public health laboratory capacity to respond to chemical agents of terror will also be considered.

Plan submission procedures for the FY03 have not yet been developed, however, fund distribution formulas will be developed by June 15, 2003. TDH expects to receive approval of submitted plans by late July or August, and funds will be received in Texas by August 31, 2003.

Hospital Preparedness and Response Capacity (Health Resources and Services Administration)

This program is to help assess the capabilities of Texas hospitals to respond to a bioterrorism event and provide support to hospitals to upgrade their capabilities based on assessment results. This program includes training, planning and development of regional hospital response plans, and helping fill some of the other unmet needs to be better prepared in the case of a biological event.

Both programs are administered by TDH, Office of the State Epidemiologist. For more information, please contact Dennis M. Perrotta, Ph.D., C.I.C., State Epidemiologist at (512) 458-7219 phone, (512) 458-7472 fax or visit www.tdh.state.tx.us/stateepi/anthrax.htm.